



Beekeepers Serving Beekeepers

## **PLANTING INSTRUCTIONS**

### **Xerces Urban & Garden Pollinator Mix**

#### **1. Site Selection**

When selecting a proper site for your wildflowers, pay close attention to the existing vegetation. If you have a site that has been used for a garden or a large open flowerbed establishment will be easier. Your site should receive at least six hours a day of full sunshine. Try to avoid wet areas or low areas that may have accumulated weed seeds. These areas will promote weed growth that may compete with your flowers.

#### **2. Site Preparation**

The most important thing to do to insure success in establishing your wildflowers is proper site preparation. If the site has existing vegetation it must be controlled before planting. This may be a lengthy process. Be sure to start early enough to allow for proper planting time. If the site is heavily compacted, shallow tillage is needed. Avoid deeply disturbing the soil as this will bring up more dormant weed seeds. If soil does not require tillage, rake the soil to loosen the top one to two inches. Water the site for an additional week to help germinate the new weed seeds. When the new weeds have reached two to three inches of growth, repeat herbicide application. If the use of herbicides is not desired, weeds may be controlled by the tillage. Repeated tillage throughout the growing season will provide some weed control. Other methods such as hand pulling or close mowing may also have some success.

#### **3. Seeding**

After weed control, seeding may start. The bed should be firm enough that walking on the site will not allow sinking more than half an inch. If the soil is too loose, walking or lightly tamping the soil will achieve the required density. Application of the seed can be accomplished by hand or the use of a hand held or push type spreader. Mixing your seed with an inert compound such as sand, cornmeal or sawdust will make even distribution simpler and allow the small seeds to feed through your spreader easier. After application, lightly rake the seed into the soil. Do not seed deeper than one-eighth to an absolute maximum of one half inch. The seed must touch the soil.

#### **4. Post Planting Maintenance**

Your new flowers will need a moist seedbed to allow proper germination. If rainfall is not sufficient, water enough to keep the site moist but not wet. Do not apply water in large amounts initially as this may create a crust that the germinating seedlings may find difficult to break through. Avoid fertilizer applications as well. High water and fertilizer will benefit the competing weeds more than the flowers. When the new growth on your site is large enough, hand removal of weeds is beneficial. Be aware that your new seedlings may resemble weeds themselves. A good way to identify weeds is to prepare your site in order to plant in rows. Anything germinating outside the row should be removed. Care should be taken when removing weeds close to flowers to not damage the desired plant. If your seed mix contains annuals, do not mow until the flowers have finished blooming. If your mix contains only perennials, mow at a height of six inches or more throughout the first growing season. Care should be taken to mow before the weeds set seed to prevent future germination of these seeds. Keep in mind that perennials take at least two years to bloom and many take as long as three years to reach full potential.

#### 5. When to Plant

The optimum rainfall period, severity of the winter and dormancy of the seed will determine the most favorable time to plant wildflowers in your area. Annual wildflowers must be planted in the spring or as a dormant seeding in late fall. These plants need to re-seed for growth the following year. Planting too late in the spring or summer will not allow enough time for these plants to mature and develop viable seeds. Biennials can be planted in spring or as a late fall dormant seeding. Dormant seeding offers natural stratification of seeds in the soil over winter months for better germination in the spring, but early spring weeds may develop before germination. A late spring planting with pre-seeding weed control will give better results and less long-term management. The most important thing is to use your own judgment on planting time. However, no instructions can be 100% fail proof. This information is given as a guide only. Local extension service employees or agronomists from the various conservation agencies should be able to advise you for your area.

#### 6. Seeding Rate

The seeding rate is not a set amount. The size of seeds, the seed species and the amount to be spent are all factors to be considered. In general, for small areas the amounts are 1 ounce for 250 square feet or 1 pound per 4,000 sq. ft.

These planting instructions are brought to you by the Wildflower Group of the American Seed Trade Association.